

Claims

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3 1. A method for organizing a dialogue of messages between a
4 moderator and a number of participants in communication over a network
5 comprising:

6 obtaining information about the participants;
7 providing to the participants a question;
8 receiving from each of one or more sending participants a first-round
9 message in response to the question;
10 grouping at least some of the participants into groups;
11 for one or more of the sending participants, automatically sending the
12 received first-round message to one or more receiving participants with whom
13 the sending participant is grouped; and
14 receiving from each of one or more of the receiving participants a
15 follow-up message in response to the first-round message from the sending
16 participant.

17 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the groups are based on the
18 registration information entered by participants.

19 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the groups are created randomly.

20 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the groups are created based upon
21 the first-round answers.

22 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising repeating the following
23 steps one or more times: sending one or more of the follow-up messages to one
24 or more receiving participants with whom the sender of the follow-up message is
25 grouped and receiving from one or more recipients of the follow-up message a
26 follow-up message in response.

27 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving from at least
some of the participants an indication that the question should be used for further

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1 discussion.

2 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising automatically routing
3 messages from a particular round to a specialist in the subject matter of the
4 message.

5 8. A system for organizing messages created among a moderator and a
6 number of participants in communication over a network, the system comprising:
7 a registration module for obtain participant registration information;
8 a select audience module for grouping at least some of the participants into
9 groups;

10 a question module for providing to participants a question, receiving from
11 one or more of the participants a message in response to the question, sending
12 each of one or more of the messages to one or more receiving participants with
13 whom the sender of the message is grouped, and receiving from one or more of
14 the receiving participants a message in response to the message received by the
15 receiving participant.

16 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the system can repeat the process of
17 receiving and sending messages among grouped participants as desired.

18 10. The system of claim 8, wherein the select audience module groups
19 participants randomly.

20 11. The system of claim 8, wherein the select audience module groups
21 participants based on the message sent in response to the question.

22 12. The system of claim 8, wherein the select audience module uses
23 registration information to group participants.

24 13. The system of claim 8, further comprising a chat module that allows
25 participants to send messages in real time over the network while respecting
26 usage rules based on user roles.

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1 14. The system of claim 8, further comprising a threaded messaging
2 module that allows messages to be sent, posted, and archived.

3 15. The system of claim 14, wherein messages can be promoted from the
4 question module to the threaded messaging module.

5 16. The system of claim 8, further comprising a chat module that allows
6 participants to send messages in real time over the network, and a threaded
7 messaging module that allows messages to be sent, posted, and archived.

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